





Old South Leaflets.

No. 41.

Washington's Tour to the Ohio.

FROM HIS JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE OHIO RIVER IN 1770.

October 17th.—Dr. Craik and myself, with Captain Crawford and others, arrived at Fort Pitt, distant from the Crossing forty-three and a half measured miles. In riding this distance we passed over a great deal of exceedingly fine land, (chiefly white-oak,) especially from Seveigley's Creek to Turtle Creek, but the whole broken; resembling, (as I think all the lands in this country do,) the Loudoun lands for hills. We lodged in what is called the town, distant about three hundred yards from the fort, at one Mr. Semple's who keeps a very good house of public entertainment. These houses, which are built of logs, and ranged into streets, are on the Monongahela, and I suppose may be about twenty in number, and inhabited by Indian traders, &c. The fort is built on the point between the rivers Allegany and Monongahela, but not so near the pitch of it as Fort Duquesne stood. It is five-sided and regular, two of which next the land are of brick; the others stockade. A moat encompasses it. The garrison consists of two companies of Royal Irish, commanded by Captain Edmonson.

18th.—Dined in the Fort with Colonel Croghan and the officers of the garrison; supped there also, meeting with great civility from the gentlemen, and engaged to dine with Colonel Croghan the next day at his seat, about four miles up the Allegany.

19th.—Received a message from Colonel Croghan, that the White Mingo and other chiefs of the Six Nations had something to say to me, and desiring that I should be at his house about eleven (where they were to meet), I went up and received a

speech, with a string of wampum from the White Mingo, to the following effect.

"That I was a person whom some of them remember to have seen, when I was sent on an embassy to the French, and most of them had heard of, they were come to bid me welcome to this country, and to desire that the people of Virginia would consider them as friends and brothers, linked together in one chain; that I would inform the governor, that it was their wish to live in peace and harmony with the white people, and that though there had been some unhappy differences between them and the people upon our frontiers, they were all made up, and they hoped forgotten; and concluded with saying, that their brothers of Virginia did not come among them and trade as the inhabitants of the other provinces did, from whence they were afraid that we did not look upon them with so friendly an eye as they could wish."

To this I answered, (after thanking them for their friendly welcome,) that all the injuries and affronts, that had passed on either side, were now totally forgotten, and that I was sure nothing was more wished and desired by the people of Virginia, than to live in the strictest friendship with them; that the Virginians were a people not so much engaged in trade as the Pennsylvanians, &c., which was the reason of their not being so frequently among them; but that it was possible they might for the time to come have stricter connexions with them, and that I would acquaint the governor with their desires.

After dinner at Colonel Croghan's we returned to Pittsburg, Colonel Croghan with us, who intended to accompany us part of the way down the river, having engaged an Indian called the Pheasant, and one Joseph Nicholson an interpreter, to attend us the whole voyage; also a young Indian warrior.

20th.—We embarked in a large canoe, with sufficient store of provisions and necessities, and the following persons, (besides Dr. Craik and myself,) to wit:—Captain Crawford, Joseph Nicholson, Robert Bell, William Harrison, Charles Morgan, and Daniel Rendon, a boy of Captain Crawford's, and the Indians, who were in a canoe by themselves. From Fort Pitt we sent our horses and boys back to Captain Crawford's, with orders to meet us there again the 14th day of November. Colonel Croghan, Lieutenant Hamilton, and Mr. Magee, set out with us. At two we dined at Mr. Magee's, and encamped ten miles below, and four above the Logstown. We passed several large islands, which appeared to [be] very good, as the bottoms also did on each side of the river alternately; the hills

on one side being opposite to the bottoms on the other, which seem generally to be about three or four hundred yards wide, and so *vice versa*.

21st.—Left our encampment about six o'clock, and breakfasted at the Logstown, where we parted with Colonel Croghan and company about nine o'clock. At eleven we came to the mouth of the Big Beaver Creek, opposite to which is a good situation for a house, and above it, on the same side, (that is the west,) there appears to be a body of fine land. About five miles lower down, on the east side, comes in Raccoon Creek, at the mouth of which and up it appears to be a body of good land also. All the land between this creek and the Monongahela, and for fifteen miles back, is claimed by Colonel Croghan under a purchase from the Indians, (and which sale he says is confirmed by his Majesty.) On this creek, where the branches thereof interlock with the waters of Shirtees Creek, there is, according to Colonel Croghan's account, a body of fine, rich, level land. This tract he wants to sell, and offers it at five pounds sterling per hundred acres, with an exemption of quit-rents for twenty years; after which, to be subject to the payment of four shillings and two pence sterling per hundred; provided he can sell it in ten-thousand-acre lots. Note: the unsettled state of this country renders any purchase dangerous. From Raccoon Creek to Little Beaver Creek appears to me to be little short of ten miles, and about three miles below this we encamped; after hiding a barrel of biscuit in an island (in sight) to lighten our canoe.

22d.—As it began to snow about midnight, and continued pretty steadily at it, it was about half after seven before we left our encampment. At the distance of about eight miles we came to the mouth of Yellow Creek, (to the west) opposite to, or rather below which, appears to be a long bottom of very good land, and the ascent to the hills apparently gradual. There is another pretty large bottom of very good land about two or three miles above this. About eleven or twelve miles from this, and just above what is called the Long Island (which though so distinguished is not very remarkable for length, breadth, or goodness), comes in on the east side the river a small creek, or run, the name of which I could not learn; and a mile or two below the island, on the west side, comes in Big Stony Creek (not larger in appearance than the other), on neither of which does there seem to be any large bottoms or bodies of good land. About seven miles from the last mentioned creek, twenty-eight from our last encampment, and about

seventy-five from Pittsburg, we came to the Mingo Town, situate on the west side the river, a little above the Cross Creeks. This place contains about twenty cabins, and seventy inhabitants of the Six Nations. Had we set off early, and kept constantly at it, we might have reached lower than this place to-day; as the water in many places run pretty swift, in general more so than yesterday. The river from Fort Pitt to the Logstown has some ugly rifts and shoals, which we found somewhat difficult to pass, whether from our inexperience of the channel, or not, I cannot undertake to say. From the Logstown to the mouth of Little Beaver Creek is much the same kind of water; that is, rapid in some places, gliding gently along in others, and quite still in many. The water from Little Beaver Creek to the Mingo Town, in general, is swifter than we found it the preceding day, and without any shallows; there being some one part or another always deep, which is a natural consequence, as the river in all the distance from Fort Pitt to this town has not widened at all, nor doth the bottoms appear to be any larger. The hills which come close to the river opposite to each bottom are steep; and on the side in view, in many places, rocky and cragged; but said to abound in good land on the tops. These are not a range of hills, but broken and cut in two, as if there were frequent watercourses running through, (which however we did not perceive to be the case, consequently they must be small if any.) The river along down abounds in wild geese, and several kinds of ducks, but in no great quantity. We killed five wild turkeys to-day. Upon our arrival at the Mingo Town, we received the disagreeable news of two traders being killed at a town called the Grape-Vine Town, thirty-eight miles below this; which caused us to hesitate whether we should proceed, or wait for further intelligence.

23^d.—Several imperfect accounts coming in, agreeing that only one person was killed, and the Indians not supposing it to be done by their people, we resolved to pursue our passage, till we could get some more distinct account of this transaction. Accordingly about two o'clock we set out with the two Indians, who were to accompany us, in our canoe, and in about four miles came to the mouth of a creek called Sculp Creek on the east side, at the mouth of which is a bottom of very good land, as I am told there likewise is up it. The Cross Creeks, (as they are called,) are not large; that on the west side is biggest. At the Mingo Town we found and left sixty & odd warriors of the Six Nations, going to the Cherokee country to proceed to war against the Catawbas. About ten miles below the town,

we came to two other cross creeks; that on the west side largest, but not big, and called by Nicholson, French Creek. About three miles, or a little better below this, at the lower point of some islands, which stand contiguous to each other, we were told by the Indians with us that three men from Virginia (by Virginians they mean all the people settled upon Redstone, &c.) had marked the land from hence all the way to Redstone; that there was a body of exceeding fine land lying about this place, and up opposite to the Mingo Town, as also down to the mouth of Fishing Creek. At this place we encamped.

24th.—We left our encampment before sunrise, and about six miles below it we came to the mouth of a pretty smart creek, coming in to the eastward, called by the Indians Split Island Creek, from its running in against an island. On this creek there is the appearance of good land a distance up it. Six miles below this again we came to another creek on the west side, called by Nicholson, Wheeling; and about a mile lower down appears to be another small water coming in on the east side, which I remark, because of the scarcity of them, and to show how badly furnished this country is with mill-seats. Two or three miles below this again is another run on the west side, up which is a near way by land to the Mingo Town; and about four miles lower, comes in another on the east, at which place is a path leading to the settlement at Redstone. About a mile and a half below this again, comes in the Pipe Creek, so called by the Indians from a stone, which is found here, out of which they make pipes. Opposite to this, that is, on the east side, is a bottom of exceeding rich land; but as it seems to lie low, I am apprehensive that it is subject to be overflowed. This bottom ends where the effects of a hurricane appear, by the destruction and havoc among the trees. Two or three miles below the Pipe Creek is a pretty large creek on the west side, called by Nicholson Fox-Grape-Vine, by others Captema Creek, on which, eight miles up, is the town called the Grape-Vine Town; and at the mouth of it is the place where it was said the traders lived, and the one was killed. To this place we came about three o'clock in the afternoon, and finding nobody there, we agreed to camp; that Nicholson and one of the Indians might go up to the town, and inquire into the truth of the report concerning the murder.

25th.—About seven o'clock, Nicholson and the Indian returned; they found nobody at the town but two old Indian women (the men being a hunting); from these they learnt that the trader was not killed, but drowned in attempting to ford the

Ohio; and that only one boy, belonging to the traders, was in these parts; the trader, (father to him) being gone for horses to take home their skins. About half an hour after seven we set out from our encampment; around which and up the creek is a body of fine land. In our passage down to this we see innumerable quantities of turkeys, and many deer watering and browsing on the shore-side, some of which we killed. Neither yesterday nor the day before did we pass any rifts, or very rapid water, the river gliding gently along; nor did we perceive any alteration in the general face of the country, except that the bottoms seemed to be getting a little longer and wider, as the bends of the river grew larger.

About five miles from the Vine Creek comes in a very large creek to the eastward, called by the Indians Cut Creek, from a town or tribe of Indians, which they say was cut off entirely in a very bloody battle between them and the Six Nations. This creek empties just at the lower end of an island, and is seventy or eighty yards wide; and I fancy it is the creek commonly called by the people of Red-stone &c Wheeling. It extends, according to the Indians' account, a great way, and interlocks with the branches of Split-Island Creek; abounding in very fine bottoms, and exceeding good land. Just below this, on the west side, comes in a small run; and about five miles below it, on the west side also, another middling large creek empties, called by the Indians Broken-Timber Creek; so named from the timber that is destroyed on it by a hurricane; on the head of this was a town of the Delawares, which is now left. Two miles lower down, on the same side, is another creek smaller than the last, and bearing, (according to the Indians,) the same name. Opposite to these two creeks, (on the east side,) appears to be a large bottom of good land. About two miles below the last mentioned creek, on the east side, and at the end of the bottom aforementioned, comes in a small creek or large run. Seven miles from this comes in Muddy Creek, on the east side of the river, a pretty large creek, and heads up against and with some of the waters of Monongahela, (according to the Indians' account,) and contains some bottoms of very good land; but in general the hills are steep, and country broken about it. At the mouth of this creek is the largest flat I have seen upon the river; the bottom extending two or three miles up the river above it, and a mile below; tho it does not seem to be of the richest kind and yet is exceeding good upon the whole, if it be not too low and subject to freshets. About half way in the long reach we encamped,

opposite to the beginning of a bottom on the east side of the river. At this place we threw out some lines at night and found a catfish, of the size of our largest river cats, hooked to it in the morning, though it was of the smallest kind here. We found no rifts in this day's passage, but pretty swift water in some places, and still in others. We found the bottoms increased in size, both as to length and breadth, and the river more choked up with fallen trees, and the bottom of the river next the shores rather more muddy, but in general stony, as it has been all the way down.

26th.—Left our encampment at half an hour after six o'clock, and passed a small run on the west side about four miles lower. At the lower end of the long reach, and for some distance up it, on the east side, is a large bottom, but low, and covered with beech near the river-shore, which is no indication of good land. The long reach is a straight course of the river for about eighteen or twenty miles, which appears the more extraordinary as the Ohio in general is remarkably crooked. There are several islands in this reach, some containing an hundred or more acres of land; but all I apprehend liable to be overflowed.

At the end of this reach we found one Martin and Lindsay, two traders, and from them learnt, that the person drowned was one Philips, attempting, in company with Rogers, another Indian trader, to swim the river with their horses at an improper place; Rogers himself narrowly escaping. Five miles lower down comes in a large creek from the east, right against an island of good land, at least a mile or two in length. At the mouth of this creek (the name of which I could not learn, except that it was called by some Bull's Creek, from one Bull that hunted on it) is a bottom of good land, though rather too much mixed with beech. Opposite to this island the Indians showed us a buffalo's path, the tracks of which we see. Five or six miles below the last mentioned creek we came to the Three Islands before which we observed a small run on each side coming in. Below these islands is a large body of flat land, with a watercourse running through it on the east side, and the hills back neither so high nor steep in appearance, as they are up the river. On the other hand, the bottoms do not appear so rich, though much longer and wider. The bottom last mentioned is upon a straight reach of the river, I suppose six or eight miles in length, at the lower end of which on the east side comes in a pretty large run from the size of the mouth. About this, above, below and back, there seems to be a very large body of flat land with some little risings in it.

About twelve miles below the Three Islands we encamped, just above the mouth of a creek, which appears pretty large at the mouth, and just above an island. All the lands from a little below the creek, which I have distinguished by the name of Bull Creek, appear to be level, with some small hillocks intermixed, as far as we could see into the country. We met with no rifts to-day, but some pretty strong water; upon the whole tolerable gentle. The sides of the river were a good deal incommoded with old trees, which impeded our passage a little. This day proved clear and pleasant; the only day since the 18th that it did not rain or snow, or threaten the one or other.

27th.—Left our encampment a quarter before seven; and after passing the creek near which we lay, and another much the same size and on the same side, (west) also an island about two miles in length, (but not wide,) we came to the mouth of Muskingum, distant from our encampment about four miles. This river is about one hundred and fifty yards wide at the mouth; it runs out in a gentle current and clear stream, and is navigable a great way into the country for canoes. From Muskingum to the Little Kanhawa is about thirteen miles. This is about as wide at the mouth as the Muskingum, but the water much deeper. It runs up towards the inhabitants of Monongahela, and, according to the Indians' account, forks about forty or fifty miles up it, and the ridge between the two prongs leads directly to the settlement. To this fork, and above, the water is navigable for canoes. On the upper side of this river there appears to be a bottom of exceeding rich land, and the country from hence quite up to the Three Islands level and in appearance fine. The Ohio running round it in the nature of a horse-shoe forms a neck of flat land, which, added to that running up the second long reach (aforementioned,) cannot contain less than fifty thousand acres in view.

About six or seven miles below the mouth of the Little Kanhawa, we came to a small creek on the west side, which the Indians called Little Hockhocking; but before we did this, we passed another small creek on the same side near the mouth of that river, and a cluster of islands afterwards. The lands for two or three miles below the mouth of the Kenhawa on both sides of the Ohio appear broken and indifferent; but opposite to the Little Hockhocking there is a bottom of exceeding good land, through which there runs a small watercourse. I suppose there may be, of this bottom and flat land together, two or three thousand acres. The lower end of this bottom is opposite to

a small island, which I dare say little of it is to be seen when the river is high. About eight miles below Little Hockhocking we encamped opposite to the mouth of the Great Hockhocking, which, though so called, is not a large water; though the Indians say canoes can go up it forty or fifty miles. Since we left the Little Kenhawa the lands appear neither so level nor so good. The bends of the river and bottoms are longer, indeed, but not so rich as in the upper part of the river.

28th.—Left our encampment about seven o'clock. Two miles below, a small run comes in, on the east side, through a piece of land that has a very good appearance, the bottom beginning above our encampment, and continuing in appearance wide for four miles down, to a place where there comes in a small run, and to the hills, where we found Kiashuta and his hunting party encamped. Here we were under a necessity of paying our compliments, as this person was one of the Six Nation chiefs, and the head of them upon this river. In the person of Kiashuta I found an old acquaintance, he being one of the Indians that went to the French in 1753. He expressed a satisfaction at seeing me, and treated us with great kindness, giving us a quarter of very fine buffalo. He insisted upon our spending that night with him, and, in order to retard us as little as possible, moves his camp down the river about 6 miles just below the mouth of the creek, the name of which I could not learn, it not being large. At this place we all encamped. After much counselling the over night, they all came to my fire the next morning with great formality; when Kiashuta, rehearsing what had passed between me and the Sachems at Colonel Croghan's, thanked me for saying, that peace and friendship were the wish of the people of Virginia, (with them) and for recommending it to the traders to deal with them upon a fair and equitable footing; and then again expressed their desire of having a trade opened with Virginia, and that the governor thereof might not only be made acquainted therewith, but of their friendly disposition towards the white people. This I promised to do.

29th.—The tedious ceremony, which the Indians observe in their counsellings and speeches, detained us till nine o'clock. Opposite to the creek, just below which we encamped, is a pretty long bottom, and I believe tolerably wide; but about eight or nine miles below the aforementioned creek, and just below a pavement of rocks on the west side, comes in a creek, with fallen timber at the mouth, on which the Indians say there are wide bottoms and good land. The river bottoms above,

for some distance, are very good, and continue for near half a mile below the creek. The pavement of rocks is only to be seen at low water. About a mile or a little better below the mouth of the creek there is another pavement of rocks on the east side, in a kind of sedgy ground. On this creek many buffaloes are according to the Indians' account. Six miles below this comes in a small creek on the west side, at the end of a small, naked island, and just above another pavement of rocks. This creek comes thro a bottom of fine land, and opposite to it, (on the east side of the river,) appears to be a large bottom of very fine land also. At this place begins what they call the Great Bend. Five miles below, this, again on the east side, comes in (about 200 yards above a little stream or gut) another creek, which is just below an island, on the upper point of which are some dead standing trees, and a parcel of white-bodied sycamores; in the mouth of this creek lies a sycamore blown down by the wind. From hence an east line may be run three or four miles; thence a north line till it strikes the river, which I apprehend would include about three or four thousand acres of exceeding valuable land. At the mouth of this creek which is three or four miles above two islands (at the lower end of the last is a rapid, and the point of the bend) is the warrior's path to the Cherokee country. For two miles and a half below this the Ohio runs a north-east course, and finishes what they call the Great Bend. Two miles and a half below this we encamped. . . .

November 1st.—A little before eight o'clock we set off with our canoe up the river, to discover what kinds of lands lay upon the Kenhawa. The land on both sides this river just at the mouth is very fine; but on the east side, when you get towards the hills, (which I judge to be about six or seven hundred yards from the river,) it appears to be wet, and better adapted for meadow than tillage. This bottom continues up the east side for about two miles; and by going up the Ohio a good tract might be got of bottom land, including the old Shawnee Town, which is about three miles up the Ohio, just above the mouth of a creek, where the aforementioned bottom ends on the east side the Kenhawa, which extends up it at least fifty miles by the Indians' account and of great width (to be ascertained as we come down); in many places very rich, in others somewhat wet and pondy; fit for meadow, but upon the whole exceeding valuable, as the land after you get out of the rich bottom is very good for grain, tho' not rich. We judged we went up this river about ten miles to-day. On the

east side appear to be the same good bottoms, but small, neither long nor wide, and the hills back of them rather steep and poor.

2d.—We proceeded up the river with the canoe about four miles farther, and then encamped, and went a hunting; killed five buffaloes and wounded some others, three deer, &c. This country abounds in buffaloes and wild game of all kinds; as also in all kinds of wild fowl, there being in the bottoms a great many small, grassy ponds, or lakes, which are full of swans, geese, and ducks of different kinds. Some of our people went up the river four or five miles higher, and found the same kind of bottom on the west side; and we were told by the Indians, that it continued to the falls, which they judged to be fifty or sixty miles higher up. . . .

17th.—There is very little difference in the general width of the river from Fort Pitt to the Kenhawa; but in the depth I believe the odds are considerably in favor of the lower parts, as we found no shallows below the Mingo Town, except in one or two places where the river was broad, and there, I do not know but there might have been a deep channel in some part of it. Every here and there are islands, some larger and some smaller, which, operating in the nature of locks, or steps, occasion pretty still water above, but for the most part strong and rapid water alongside of them. However there is none of these so swift but that a vessel may be rowed or set up with poles. When the river is in its natural state, large canoes, that will carry five or six thousand weight or more, may be worked against stream by four hands, twenty or twenty-five miles a day; and down, a good deal more. The Indians, who are very dexterous (even their women) in the management of canoes, have their hunting-camps and cabins all along the river, for the convenience of transporting their skins by water to market. In the fall, so soon as the hunting-season comes on, they set out with their families for this purpose; and in hunting will move their camps from place to place, till by the spring they get two or three hundred or more miles from their towns; then beaver catch it in their way up, which frequently brings them into the month of May, when the women are employed in planting, the men at market, and in idleness, till the Fall again, when they pursue the same course. During the summer months they live a poor and perishing life.

The Indians who reside upon the Ohio, (the upper parts of it at least,) are composed of Shawnees, Delawares, and some of the Mingoes, who, getting but little part of the consideration

that was given for the lands eastward of the Ohio, view the settlement of the people upon this river with an uneasy and jealous eye, and do not scruple to say, that they must be compensated for their right if the people settle thereon, notwithstanding the cession of the Six Nations thereto. On the other hand, the people from Virginia and elsewhere are exploring and marking all the lands that are valuable, not only on Redstone and other waters of the Monongahela, but along down the Ohio as low as the Little Kenhawa; and by next summer I suppose will get to the Great Kenhawa at least. How difficult it may be to contend with these people afterwards is easy to be judged, from every day's experience of lands actually settled, supposing these to be made; than which nothing is more probable, if the Indians permit them, from the disposition of the people at present.

Washington's interest in the West began when he was hardly out of boyhood, and was employed to survey lands for Lord Fairfax among the Alleghanies. In 1749 his brothers, Lawrence and Augustine Washington, became members and Lawrence the chief manager of the Ohio Company, formed in Virginia that year for the colonization of the Ohio country,—the first scheme for the settlement of the West by Englishmen. His *Journal of a Tour to the Ohio in 1753*, published after his visit to the French posts on the Alleghany, and his letters at the time, show how deeply he realized the importance of the struggle between France and England for the possession of the great West. No other Virginian took so important a part in that struggle. At the close of the French war he received 5,000 acres on the Ohio, his claim as an officer for services in the war; and he possessed himself of other claims to so large an extent that at one time he controlled over 60,000 acres on the Ohio, at the outbreak of the Revolution being probably the largest owner of western lands in America. See the *Washington-Crawford Letters Concerning Western Lands*, edited by C. W. Butterfield. Crawford was the surveyor employed by Washington on the Ohio. Washington's Journal of his own tour to the Ohio in 1770, to inspect these lands,—about half of which is published in the present leaflet,—is remarkable for its careful studies of the condition and prospects of this part of the western country. This journey down the Ohio took him past the mouth of the Muskingum and the place where Rufus Putnam and the men from New England, less than twenty years later, were to found Marietta. Earlier in this same year, 1770, Washington had corresponded with Jefferson about the opening up of the Potomac and a connection with the Ohio, as "the channel of conveyance of the extensive and valuable trade of a rising empire"; and this was the first subject of his thought upon the close of the Revolution. He explored the Mohawk route to the West. He explored the head waters of the Potomac and the Ohio, travelling nearly 700 miles on horseback, making careful maps. He wrote a remarkable letter to Benjamin Harrison, the governor of Virginia, urging the opening of lines of communication with the West. See this letter and the historical notes in *Old South Leaflet*, No. 16. He became the president of the Potomac Company, organized in 1785 for establishing connections with the West. See Pickell's *A New Chapter in the Early Life of Washington* for a full account of this, and Washington's letters to Jefferson, Lee, and others on the importance of opening up the West and binding the sections of the country firmly together, which latter point he strongly emphasized in his Farewell Address. For his interest in the Ordinance of 1787 and his services in behalf of Gen. Rufus Putnam and the Ohio Company in the settlement of Marietta and the organization of the North-west territory, see the *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler* and the *St. Clair Papers*. The whole history of Washington's interest in the opening of the West forms one of the most important chapters of his life.

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